

1508/20
PALEMON AND LAVINIA.

A

LEGENDARY TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.

ENLARGED FROM A STORY IN THOMSON'S SEASONS.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

By MACFARQUHAR AND ELLIOT.

M,DCCLXXXIII.



A D D R E S S
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THE Author of the following pages presents his most respectful compliments to those Ladies and Gentlemen, and such of the Public in general, as are inclined to become purchasers of the Work; and begs leave to observe to them, that an early attachment to the delightful writings of Thomson, first induced him to enlarge that beautiful passage in his *Autumn*, beginning with

“ The lovely young Lavinia once had friends,” &c.
as thinking the sweet simplicity of so interesting a tale, might afford matter sufficient for a regular poetic story.

THE leisure hours the Author was possessed of at the time he first entertained those sentiments, were innocently employed in his favourite pursuit, without the least design of making those labours public, he imagined too inaccurate for general inspection.—Conscious of his inability to im-

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prove *what has been already drawn in all the sublime of prose and verse, (the original tale being taken from a similar passage in the Holy Bible), his only wish has been to enlarge it; and he humbly submits his attempt to the candour and indulgence of the Public.*

To those of his readers who would wish to examine it by the rigid rules of critical inspection, he would recommend, in order to alleviate their severity, an observation of one of our dramatic writers, that it would be the height of folly to

“ Break an insect on the wheel.”

EDIN. Dec. }
1782. }



P A-

PALEMON AND LAVINIA.

I.

REMOTE—from an ungrateful world retir'd!—
 A rural spot (in yon sequester'd vale)
 Conceal'd a jewel, form'd to be admir'd,
 The pride, the glory, of the poet's tale,

II.

A rigid fortune young Lavinia drove
 To quit the mansion where she first drew breath;
 (Of all the comforts of paternal love
 Bereft, too early, by relentless death!)

III.

Her widow'd mother (once Acasto's wife)
 Partook these sad calamities of fate;
 By age enfeebled, here, her weary life
 She led unnotic'd, in this low retreat.

IV.

An humble roof this hapless pair obscur'd,
 Plac'd far below the busy world's regard;
 The frowns of fortune, patient, they endur'd,
 Possess'd that virtue was its own reward.

V.

In those surrounding shades, (a deep recess),
 They were by humble solitude conceal'd;
 No trace of what their birthright did possess,
 The splendor of their former state reveal'd.

VI.

Together, thus, they shunn'd the cruel scorn,
 Which virtue, when depress'd, too often finds
 From those, who, in a sphere exalted born,
 Live yet unblest'd with heav'n-bestowing minds.

VII.



VII.

Almost on nature's common bounty fed,
 Like the gay birds that sung 'em to their rest :—
 Yet still with anxious care the parent bred
 The dear surviving comfort of her breast.

VIII.

Each rip'ning virtue that cou'd grace the sex,
 The sweet Lavinia's bosom did adorn :
 Stranger to thoughts that cou'd her mind perplex ;—
 Unknown alike to envy and to scorn.

IX.

Her looks were fresher than the morning-rose,
 In artless beauty she was grown mature :
 Her eye, her mind's perfection did disclose ;
 And spoke her harmless soul, serene and pure !

X.

A matchless grace, the lovely nymph cou'd boast,
 Beyond the aid of dress, or worldly pelf :
 When unadorn'd, she was adorn'd the most ;—
 Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self.

XI.

With fervent zeal she did her God adore :
 No fretful care did her repose molest ;
 Save,—when reflection on their scanty store,
 Each rising thought, each generous wish oppress'd.

XII.

Then sad remembrance wou'd recal the thought,
 How “ fortune smil'd deceitful at her birth :”
 And from her heaving breast, with anguish fraught,
 Thro' her bright eyes the streaming tear burst forth.

XIII.

With kind solicitude the parent strove,
 By fond advice, her darling's wo to sooth ;
 Urg'd her to place her happiness above,
 Where heav'nly pow'r cou'd rigid fortune smooth.

XIV.

Yet scarce cou'd she herself the pang evade,
 Or cease to recollect Acasto's name :
 A loss like his, had an impresson made,
 Lasting as life ; immortal as his fame !

XV.

L A V I N I A.

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XV.

Well might the widow'd mourner wail her fate,
And long regret the worth that once she lov'd;
The fond remembrance of her happier state,
Cou'd not be ever from her thoughts remov'd.

XVI.

Those happier times recall'd but foster'd grief!
Creative fancy but affliction brought;
From which she found it hard to gain relief,
And chace the pensive, melancholy thought.

XVII.

Acasto once possess'd a large domain,
And high in fortune's fickle favour stood:
Not were her gifts bestow'd on him in vain,
The private patriot, eminently good.

XVIII.

Distress ne'er left him with a streaming eye,
Nor humble poverty contempt endur'd,
When to his gates chance led the wand'rer nigh,
By anxious hope of sweet relief allur'd.

XIX.

XIX.

No contumacious brow here bent in scorn;
The suppliant pray'r of indigence deny'd ;
Oft he'd regret a fellow-creature born,
Shou'd be so near to misery ally'd.

XX.

Not barely to suppress misfortune's cry,
Wou'd satisfy Acasto's generous mind ;
His bounty serv'd to stop the future sigh,
Not to its present wants alone assign'd.

XXI.

Thrice gracious state, did universal love
Reign, as in him, throughout the human race !
So blest a semblance to the world above,
Wou'd give to mortals more than mortal grace,

XXII.

His honest heart avow'd the generous deed,
When charity's compulsive ardour led :
To soothe the sorrows, fate averse ! decreed
The sad attendants of the widow'd bed.

XXIII.

XXIII.

To see the eye of sickness quit despair,
And raise the languid visage to delight,
Were daily objects of Acasto's care ;
Were objects pleasing to Acasto's sight !—

XXIV.

Read this, despoilers of the plunder'd East,
And try if all your wealth such joys can give ;
Can ease the murmurs of a troubled breast,
And bid the soul in full contentment live.

XXV.

No orient gems can ease the aching heart ;
No shining ore, release the guilty mind :
The breast that once bids virtue to depart,
The stings of guilty conscience ever bind.

XXVI.

Uncertain state of happiness below !—
In vain we search for the ideal bliss ;—
How difficult, alas ! the path to know,
When good Acasto's line the way cou'd miss !

XXVII.

XXVII.

To search beyond the reach of mortal ken,
 The great o'er-ruling Providence denies ;
 Whatever comforts are denied to men,
 That glorious boon eternity supplies.

XXVIII.

'Tis ours, as humble suppliants, to ask,
 And thankfully receive what Heav'n bestow ;
 To Heav'n alone belongs the gracious task,
 To scatter blessings on the world below,

XXIX.

Stern fate decreed Acasto should decay,
 While yet his ebbing sands were nearly run ;
 Affliction stain'd the ev'ning of his day,
 And dimm'd the lustre of his morning's sun,

XXX.

Low laid in earth, his once rever'd remains
 Are now no more by rigour's hand oppress'd ;
 For ever fled those agonizing pains——
 His guides from hence, to an eternal rest !

XXXI.

From his decay, Palemon's fortunes rose ;
 A youth endow'd with every mental grace,
 As far as lavish nature cou'd dispose,
 And in one being, for perfection, place.

XXXII.

High in distinction o'er the neighb'ring swains,
 In rural elegance Palemon dwelt ;
 By all belov'd, the pride of all the plains,
 For all around his wond'rous goodness felt.

XXXIII.

Remov'd from courts and scenes of loftier life,
 Here Hospitality had her abode ;
 Here she exerted (undisturb'd by strife)
 Her boundless pow'r, the pow'r of doing good.

XXXIV.

Such as the poets did Arcadia feign,
 In man's primeval, uncorrupted state ;
 E'er yet tyrannic custom 'gan her reign,
 And native freedom was expell'd by fate.

XXXV.

Such was Palemon's feat, and such the youth
By nature form'd to bless Lavinia's worth :
Munificently great, his matchless truth,
Restor'd those prospects that adorn'd her birth.

XXXVI.

To view the pride of his autumnal store,
The golden grace that bounteous nature yields ;
He sought the fragrance of the ev'ning hour,
And rang'd with joy thro' his extensive fields.

XXXVII.

'Twas then, by strong necessity compell'd,
The poor Lavinia sought the reapers train ;
To claim, what from the poor was ne'er with-held,
The scanty pittance that might then remain.

XXXVIII.

With toilsome care, the straggling glebe she sought,
And with her lovely hands the sheaves confin'd ;
Her gentle breast with filial love was fraught,
A mother's sorrows fill'd her duteous mind.

XXXIX.

XXXIX.

Conscious she was a parent's sole support,
Whose age enfeebled did assistance ask;
That thought, oft chang'd her labours to a sport,
And mitigated the ungentle task.

XL.

Blest in her native purity of thought,
Justly her Maker's most peculiar care!
The season's heat no baneful influence brought,
But Heav'n, approving, did its fav'rite spare.

XLI.

Her dress was plain, but yet in neat attire,
Her lovely tresses flow'd with matchless grace;
All, she appear'd, that might create desire,
And give ten thousand beauties to her face.

XLII.

A form, so much unlike the rural throng,
And so employ'd, soon drew Palemon's eye;
He gaz'd, resistless, as he pass'd along,
And in compassion heav'd a tender sigh.

XLIII.

Yet not alone compassion swell'd his breast ;
 Some secret impulse his attention sway'd ;
 Some hidden cause alarm'd its wonted rest,
 An urg'd him to approach the hapless maid !

XLIV.

To learn the cause that had so much misled
 So fair an object from its proper sphere,
 (For still he thought her not a rustic bred),
 In pensive motion he approach'd the fair.

XLV.

She saw him coming ; and a fix'd surprise,
 A thousand terrors, did her soul alarm ;
 With strong emotions, did her bosom rise ;
 Till now undanger'd, now she dreaded harm.

XLVI.

With courteous action thus the noble youth
 Endeavour'd to suppress each anxious fear :—
 “ Fear not, sweet excellence ; in serious truth,
 “ The story of thy woes I'd wish to hear.

XLVII.

XLVII.

“ For some misfortunes, and of heavier weight,
 “ Than fall, in usual course, a mortal's share,
 “ Must have reduc'd thee from a happier state,
 “ And more deserving one that's born so fair!

XLVIII.

Fix'd in astonishment, the lovely maid
 In all her innate modesty appear'd;
 Her artless fears, her charms the more display'd,
 And to Palemon's soul her form endear'd.

XLIX.

A native blush her dimpled cheeks o'erspread,
 And stain'd the lilies with a crimson dye;
 Whose deeper hue, sprung from unconscious dread,
 Added new beauties to th' averted eye.

L.

Silent she stood—nor cou'd he yet prevail,
 To learn from her the story of her woes;
 In vain he sued to learn the mournful tale,
 Her name and fortunes she wou'd not disclose.

LI.

All he cou'd learn, when fear to speech gave way,
 Was, " with an aged mother she was left;
 " For her support induc'd t' employ the day,
 " Or of that only comfort be bereft."

LII.

The evening, now had far advanc'd his way,
 The setting sun scarce ting'd the western sky;
 And sable night, to supersede the day,
 In hov'ring darkness now attended nigh.

LIII.

She begg'd Palemon wou'd her hand forego,
 And to her parent let her straight return.—
 " Let me, let me, he cry'd, that parent know,
 " And from this moment shall she cease to' mourn.

LIV.

" To ease the wo-worn mind, the aching heart,
 " To me a delegated fortune's giv'n:
 " Then grant my wish; yet tell me, ere we part;
 " I stand the proxy of all-gracious heaven!

LV.

LV.

The ardent zeal which flow'd with his request,
The matchless honour all his actions shew'd,
Prevail'd so far within her gentle breast,
To promise that his suit shou'd be allow'd.

LVI.

She urg'd, that to relate the piteous tale
Of what their hopeless fortunes had befall,
Wou'd now too far upon her time prevail,
But that to-morrow's dawn the chance shou'd tell.

LVII.

Throw down those worthless sheaves, the youth exclaim'd,
Haste to thy mother, thou her sole delight ;
Here, take a richer gift ; those wou'd have sham'd
The produce of this most auspicious night.

LVIII.

His present bounty offer'd, she declin'd ;
Nor aught, but what she'd glean'd, wou'd home convey :
They parted now ;—each with an anxious mind,
To know the conflicts of the coming day.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PALEMON AND LAVINIA.

PART THE SECOND.

II.

IN racking cares Palemon pass'd the night,
Nor was Lavinia's bosom less oppress'd ;
Each, joyless, waited the returning light,
Nor balmy sleep they knew, nor needful rest.

II.

The phangs of dire suspense did each inclose,
A thousand doubts perplex'd their mad'ning brain ;
Drove far away the sweets of calm repose,
Content, and peace, with their celestial train.

III.

III.

Their ev'ning converse, prevalent in mind,
Did endless fears in either breast create ;
Now to delusive hope they both inclin'd,
Now fear'd the utmost malice of their fate.

IV.

Tho' both to guilt unknow'n, yet both, distress'd,
Felt tortures inexpressible within ;
Their hearts, with more than common pangs oppress'd,
Endur'd the sharpest punishment of sin.

V.

Soon as Auróra did her beams disclose,
T' adorn the eastern hemisphere with light,
From his uneasy bed Palemon rose ;
The morn, to him, as joyless as the night !

VI.

In vain the lark's sweet carrol greets his ear,
The vegetable world no charms cou'd yield ;
The breathing zephyrs of the morning air,
To him, regardless sported o'er the field.

VII.

In vain creation's various charms appear'd,
 Drefs'd by th' Almighty in their best array;
 To man's admiring eye the dawn endear'd,
 The splendid beauties of the rising day.

VIII.

In vain the feather'd warbler swells his throat,
 (The sweet companion of the tuneful grove);
 In vain he raises the melodious note,
 And emulates that harmony above!

IX.

All these delights had lost the wonted pow'r
 That in Palemon's mind they once possess'd;
 No joys they added to the present hour,
 By passion's influence now too much oppress'd.

X.

Lavinia only now his thoughts employ—
 Her dear idea, as it stronger grew,
 Gave all creative fancy cou'd enjoy;
 Her lovely image present to his view!

XI.

Immers'd in thought, he pensive trod the green,
 And took the path conducting to the dale,
 Where first his eyes the charming maid had seen,
 With full intent his passion to reveal.

XII.

For love, whose potent pow'r (above controul)
 No human breast cou'd ever yet withstand;
 With sway despotic in Palemon's soul,
 Resistless there, exerted sole command.

XIII.

But now the censures of the world prevail'd,
 And specious reasons did their gall impart;
 With innate fury they his breast assail'd,
 To shake the settled purpose from his heart.

XIV.

His own exalted state he now compar'd
 With that in which the humble fair one mov'd;
 And inward felt reproaches, which he fear'd
 The world wou'd cast upon his gen'rous love.

XV.

'Tis not for virtue's sake the partial throng
Arraigns th' unbiass'd principle of mind ;
Nor is't to them material, right or wrong—
To venal views alone their aims confin'd !

XVI.

O avarice ! bane of peace ! at whose curs'd shrine
The world, misjudging, ever lowly bends ;
Thy vot'ries wou'd, to gain their wish'd designs,
Pay adoration even to the fiends.

XVII.

Yet such the charms of wealth, and such the lure,
Th' enticing baits, the shining mammon throws ;
If once the heart is touch'd, no charm can cure
The sad effects of its malignant pow'rs.

XVIII.

Look round the world, survey the patriot band,
Who loudest boast them virtue's dearest friends ;
You'll see those men, the guardians of the land,
Turn grand apostates for their private ends.

XIX.

XIX.

So canker'd, so corrupt, the times, we find
That int'rest bears an universal rule ;
Nor honour's sacred promises can bind
The venal statesman, or the titl'd fool.

XX.

Who senatorial eloquence can trust,
Or rest their hopes upon a sapient head,
When men we most admire prove most unjust,
And all the steps of prostitution tread ?

XXI.

Curs'd be such men, and curs'd their latent views,
By whose designs their wretched country bleeds ;
Thousands impoverish'd, every comfort lose,
While they securely vaunt their guilty deeds !

XXII.

Enough of these : their deeds be on their heads—
Too far they've trespass'd on the muse's plan,
Whose chiefest pleasure, where she lightly treads,
Is to do homage to the virtuous man.

XXIII.

XXIII.

Yes ; there are some, a gen'rous, noble few,
Beyond the reach of foul corruption's arts ;
Who ne'er the paths of prostitution knew,
Whose heads reflect like honour on their hearts.

XXIV.

Return, my muse, and search th' infidious cause,
That raise those scruples in Palemon's mind ;
Frustrates his best intents, and foully draws
A veil o'er virtues which we rarely find.

XXV.

There are a fort of men, (the slaves of pride),
Whose precepts, to equality confin'd,
Direct their choice, to rank and wealth allied,
Nor heed the best perfections of the mind.

XXVI.

Of some like these Palemon stood in awe ;
And fear'd the force of that derisive scorn,
He knew full well he on himself shou'd draw,
Was he to stoop to one so lowly born.

XXVII.

XXVII.

A while his best resolves were lost in doubt,
 And his torn heart conflicting passions shook;
 The pangs he felt within, express'd without,
 Had mark'd his features with disorder'd look.

XXVIII.

At length the secret impulse in his breast
 O'er custom's baneful influence prevail'd;
 And now, with gentler pity's pow'r impress'd,
 Thus to himself the fair one's fate he wail'd.

XXIX.

" Alas! that ever that angelic face
 " Shou'd be the lot of some unmeaning clown!
 " Beauties like her's a monarch's choice wou'd grace,
 " And give superior lustre to a crown.

XXX.

" No rude embrace shou'd such a form profane,
 " To love's polite refinements only due;
 " Such as exalted minds alone contain—
 " Refinements that the vulgar never knew.

XXXI.

XXXI.

" Blest in each happy requisite of life
 " That can adorn the most exalted state,
 " How will her charms endear the name of wife,
 " And shine a fair example to the great !

XXXII.

Thus thought Palemon of Lavinia's worth,
 And felt the force of love's resistless fires ;
 Heedless of that disparity of birth
 The world might urge a bar to his desires.

XXXIII.

Nor o'er Lavinia less that pow'r prevail'd,
 Whose filken rule the willing world obeys ;
 A pow'r to which the heart, when once assail'd,
 In yielding softness, willing homage pays.

XXXIV.

Her beauteous bosom with emotions rose,
 And such emotions as were newly grown ;
 She fear'd her artless story to disclose ;
 And wish'd Palemon had been still unknown.

XXXV.

XXXV.

Love reign'd a very tyrant in her breast,
And prob'd the deep recesses of her soul ;
Millions of fears, her tenderness oppress,
And held her mind in absolute controul.

XXXVI.

To quit the promise she Palemon made,
Her eager steps were bent to reach the dale ;
Fearful she had th' appointed time o'erstaid,
Which she had chosen to disclose the tale.

XXXVII.

As by appointment fix'd, 'twas now they met—
Each, to each other, was a welcome guest :
“ Now, dearest maid, the tender tale relate,
“ Nor let me longer urge my fond request.

XXXVIII.

Thus said the youth ; and, with an ardent look,
His wishing eyes upon her beauties bent ;
When, as with modest awe her hand he took,
Expressive silence spoke his full intent.

XXXIX.

The starting tear her strong surprise betray'd,
 The falt'ring tongue her inward fears confess'd ;
 " Fear not, sweet excellence," he smiling said,
 " No threatening dangers shall assail thy breast.

XL.

Then eloquently begg'd her to disclose,
 His latent wish, the theme of his desire ;
 To learn from what a lineage she arose,
 And who the man she boasted once her fire.

XLI.

The legend of her sorrows she began,
 Nor longer was by needless fears appall'd ;
 " First, know then, gracious sir, that good old man,
 " My honour'd parent, was Acasto call'd.

XLII.

" Suspend the tale," the youth exulting cried ;
 " My God ! art thou Acasto's dear remains ?
 " To him ! my venerable friend, allied,
 " Of whom remembrance still respect retains.

XLIII.

“ Oft, but in vain, my farthest reach hath strove
“ To find the patron of my earlier day :
“ The father lost, the daughter claims my love ;
“ Take all that amplest gratitude can pay.

XLIV.

“ I’ve heard, indeed, his widow still surviv’d ;
“ But of her lone retreat, no trace appear’d :
“ O blest’d event !—to be from him deriv’d !
“ Thrice blest’d recess ! that such a daughter rear’d !

XLV.

“ Lord of these fields, those flocks, this wide domain,
“ The boundless pow’r fortune has giv’n to me,
“ With all the wealth my ample stores contain,
“ Beauteous Lavinia, I resign to thee.

XLVI.

“ No charms for me, this large extent of land—
“ For richer joys, I bend the willing knee ;
“ Give me this blest’d exchange, this lovely hand,
“ And make me happier, being lord of thee.

XLVII.

She blush'd consent ;—yet, with a modest grace,
 Pleased a mother's right to rule her voice :
 Palemon crav'd her guidance to the place ;
 Where her lov'd parent might confirm her choice.

XLVIII.

Straight to the cot the noble youth she led,
 Charm'd with the virtues of his lovely guide ;
 Her matchless graces had his passion fed,
 Enhanc'd her worth, and quite subdu'd his pride.

XLIX.

The aged parent, when the tale she'd heard,
 With tears of joy, confirm'd their mutual bliss ;
 Her kind consent, their loves still more endear'd,
 And added raptures to the nuptial kiss.

L.

Connubial love ! all hail, delightful tie !
 When worth and virtue form the sacred league :
 Dreadful reverse ; when falshood's arts destroy
 The wish'd effect, and peace converts to plague.

L A V I N I A.

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LI.

Not such Palemon and Lavinia's fate,
In Hymen's pleasing bonds together bound ;
They liv'd an honour to the married state,
" THE GOOD, THE GRACE OF ALL THE COUNTRY ROUND."

F I N I S.

Q A V I N A

11

Not to be taken out of the box

In the event of a fire, the box should be kept in a safe place

and not in a place where it is liable to be damaged

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